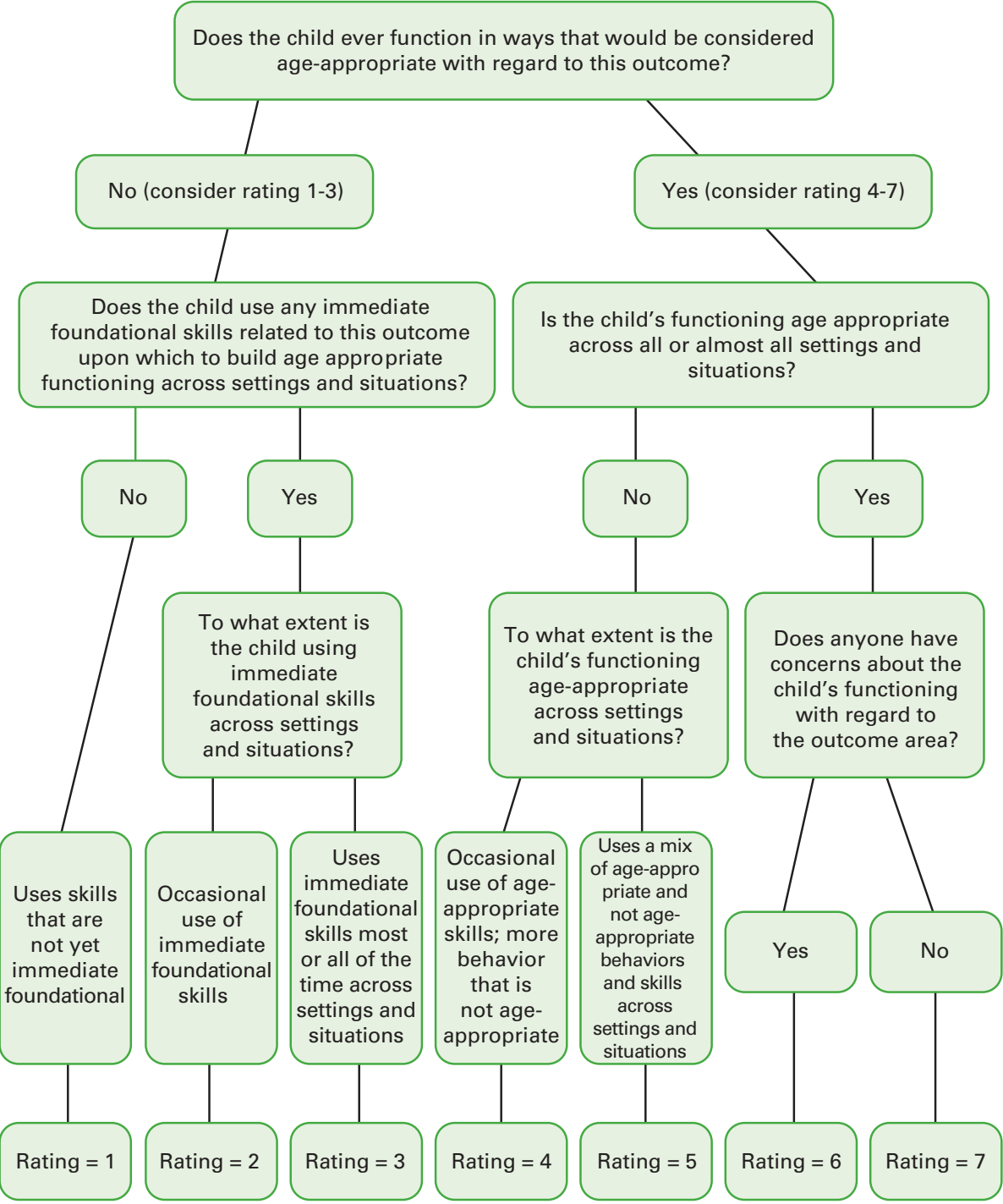


DECISION TREE FOR SUMMARY RATING DISCUSSIONS



Early Childhood Outcomes System (COS)

INTRODUCTION

All early intervention and early childhood special education programs across the country have developed early childhood outcomes measurement systems in response to the U.S. Department of Education's requirement to measure young children's progress. While Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals are written specifically for individual children, **the three child outcomes measured for federal reporting purposes are the same for everyone and measure the change in a child's overall functional development over the time** a child received early intervention or early childhood special education services.

Child outcomes ratings must be completed upon entry to the early intervention and early childhood special education program, and upon exit from these programs. Interim ratings can also be completed as a means of tracking a child's developmental progress. A comparison of the entry and exit ratings will then determine which type of developmental trajectory describes the child's progress over time. Programs are then evaluated based upon the percentage of children who maintained progress within the same developmental trajectory improved functioning and changed developmental trajectories to reach age level functioning (see, Understanding the Developmental Trajectories brochure).

The entry level ratings should be completed by the assessment team members conducting the entry level evaluations for program eligibility. This has proven to be the most reliable entry level rating process. Exit level ratings should be completed by service providers and teachers based on data from parent interviews, child observations, or other assessment data.

CHILD OUTCOMES RATINGS: AGE-EXPECTED, IMMEDIATE FOUNDATIONAL OR FOUNDATIONAL LEVELS OF FUNCTIONING

Determining how a child's functioning compares to what is expected for his or her same age peers requires knowledge of the **child outcomes, child development**, and what the **child's functioning** looks like across settings. It also takes a **team** to conduct the ratings! Gaining parent input about how the child functions at home and in the community is important as is collaboration between regular and early intervention and special education providers. Critical resources for providers and teachers include the NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development and age referencing guides. Critical skills required to conduct reliable and valid ratings include the documentation of child observations and application of age referencing information to those observations.

The decision tree process (see last page of this brochure) helps teams determine COS rating. Using information from child observation, parent interview, and other assessment data, a team compares the child's functioning to that of a same aged peer who is developing according to age expectations. If a child's functional skills fall within age-level then he or she is considered to demonstrate "Age-Expected" functioning. The term "Immediate Foundational Skills" refers to observed child behavior that is close to, but does not reach age expectation. These are the skills that occur just before those which are age expected. The term "Foundational Skills" refers to observed child behavior that is not at age expected levels and depicts the skills of a **much younger** child.





WHAT ARE THE THREE CHILD OUTCOMES?

The early childhood outcomes are not domain-specific and may include multiple developmental domains in each outcome. For example, language and communication can be found in each of the three outcomes. The same is true for cognition. Developmental domains are an artificial construct developed by adults as a means of categorizing and measuring child development. The child outcomes described here represent how children integrate skills from various domains to achieve important everyday goals. They represent the functionality of the developmental skills.

CHILD OUTCOME 1: Positive Emotional-Social Skills (including social relations)
<p>Making new friends and learning to get along with others is an important accomplishment of the early childhood years. Children develop a sense of who they are by having rich and rewarding interactions with adults and peers. They learn that different rules and norms apply to different everyday settings and that they need to adjust their behavior accordingly.</p> <p>This outcome involves relating to adults, relating to other children, and for older children, following rules related to groups or interacting with others.</p> <p>This outcome also includes concepts and behaviors such as attachment/separation/autonomy, expressing emotions and feelings, learning rules and expectations in social situations, and social interactions and social play.</p>
CHILD OUTCOME 2: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language and communication [and early literacy*]) *for children 3 through 5
<p>During the early childhood period, children display tremendous changes in what they know and can do. The knowledge and skills acquired in the early childhood years, such as those related to communication, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy, provide the foundation for success in kindergarten, the early school years, and beyond.</p> <p>This outcome involves activities such as thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, number concepts, counting and understanding the physical and social worlds.</p> <p>This outcome also includes a variety of skills related to language and literacy including vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and letter recognition.</p>
CHILD OUTCOME 3: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Their Needs
<p>As children develop, they become increasingly more capable of acting on their worlds. With the help of supportive adults, young children learn to address their own needs in more sophisticated ways and with increasing independence. They integrate their developing skills, such as fine motor skills and increasingly complex communication skills to achieve goals that are of value to them.</p> <p>This outcome involves behaviors like taking care of basic needs, getting from place to place, using tools (such as forks, toothbrushes, and crayons), and, in older children, contributing to their own health, safety, and well-being.</p> <p>This outcome addresses integrating motor skills to complete tasks; taking care of one’s self in areas such as dressing, feeding, grooming, and toileting; and acting on the world in socially appropriate ways to get what one wants.</p>



DOCUMENTATION THAT SUPPORTS THE COS RATINGS

Each child’s early intervention or special education records should contain the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Form and the supporting documentation that was used to determine the rating. Monitors should be able to take this documentation and verify that the ratings were reliable and valid. Each program should develop a monitoring or quality review process for verifying the validity of the ratings.

DEFINITIONS FOR OUTCOME RATINGS: FOR USE WITH THE CHILD OUTCOMES SUMMARY (COS) FORM

OVERALL AGE-APPROPRIATE	Completely means:	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child shows functioning expected for his or her age in all or almost all everyday situations that are part of the child’s life. Functioning is considered appropriate for his or her age.• No one has any concerns about the child’s functioning in this outcome area.
		6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child’s functioning generally is considered appropriate for his or her age but there are some significant concerns about the child’s functioning in this outcome area. These concerns are substantial enough to suggest monitoring or possible additional support.• Although age-appropriate, the child’s functioning may border on not keeping pace with age expectations.
OVERALL NOT AGE-APPROPRIATE	Somewhat means:	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child shows functioning expected for his or her age some of the time and/or in some settings and situations. Child’s functioning is a mix of age-appropriate and not age-appropriate behaviors and skills.• Child’s functioning might be described as like that of a slightly younger child*.
		4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child shows occasional age-appropriate functioning across settings and situations. More functioning is not age-appropriate than age-appropriate.
	Nearly means:	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child does not yet show functioning expected of a child of his or her age in any situation.• Child uses immediate foundational skills, most or all of the time, across settings and situations. Immediate foundational skills are the skills upon which to build age-appropriate functioning.• Functioning might be described as like that of a younger child*.
		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child occasionally uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situations. More functioning reflects skills that are not immediate foundational than are immediate foundational.
	Not yet means:	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child does not yet show functioning expected of a child his or her age in any situation.• Child’s functioning does not yet include immediate foundational skills upon which to build age-appropriate functioning.• Child functioning reflects skills that developmentally come before immediate foundational skills.• Child’s functioning might be described as like that of a much younger child*.

** The characterization of functioning like a younger child only will apply to some children receiving special service such as children with developmental delays.*

